

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INDO-LIBYAN TALKS CONCLUDE

REF: NEW DELHI 11028

1. THREE DAYS OF TALKS BETWEEN GOI OFFICIALS AND VISITING LIBYAN VICE PRESIDENT JALUD CONCLUDED JULY 19 WITH THE SIGNING OF A SERIES OF BILATERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS. AMONG THESE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, WAS A PROTOCOL REGARDING COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. A GOI SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE HELD AND IF LIBYA DESIRED, INDIA WOULD TRAIN LIBYAN STUDENTS IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.

2. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT A JOINT INDO-LIBYAN COMMISSION HAS BEEN CONSTITUTED TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION. THE JOINT COMMISSION WILL MEET ONCE A YEAR OR WHENEVER IT IS NECESSARY. A JOINT INDO-LIBYAN ELECTRICITY COMPANY IS TO BE ESTABLISHED BY BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS AND LIBYAN POWER AUTHORITIES TO UNDERTAKE THERMAL POWER PROJECTS IN LIBYA. IN ADDITION, THE TWO COUN-

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TRIES HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO CONSTRUCT OTHER PROJECTS IN LIBYA, INCLUDING A 500 KM RAILWAY LINE, TWO TOWNSHIPS FOR A POPULATION OF 10,000 EACH, AND A CEMENT PLANT. A GOI OFFICIAL CLAIMED THAT ALL THE PROJECTS IN THE AGREEMENTS, IF IMPLEMENTED, WERE WORTH ABOUT DOLS 1.5 BILLION. MAJOR JALUD INDICATED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT INDIA WOULD RECEIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN THE AWARD OF TENDERS.

ALL BILATERAL ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS WILL REPORTEDLY BE MADE IN FREE CONVERTIBLE EXCHANGE. A BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT GIVES INDIA MOST FAVORED NATION'S STATUS. THE LIBYANS HAVE INDICATED AN INTEREST IN PURCHASING INDIAN RICE AND TEA.

3. JALUD'S JULY 19 PRESS CONFERENCE IN DELHI COMPRISED MUCH FAMILIAR LIBYAN RHETORIC. HE DESCRIBED EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT'S MIDEAST PEACE INITIATIVE AS "THE HOPELESS ATTEMPT OF A DESPERATE PERSON WHICH NO ARAB WILL RECOGNIZE" THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS WAS A "CONFLICT FOR SURVIVAL". "THERE CANNOT BE TWO NATIONALITIES IN THE ARAB WORLD". JALUD TOLD THE INDIAN PRESS THAT ISRAEL WAS A POST-WORLD WAR II CREATION, WHICH "WILL HAVE TO GO". CONCERNING TERRORISM, JALUD DENIED THAT LIBYA ENCOURAGED OR SUPPORTED HIJACKERS. ASKED IF LIBYA WOULD SUPPORT THE BONN DECLARATION THAT AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO COUNTRIES WHICH ENCOURAGED OR SUPPORTED HIJACKING SHOULD BE DENIED ACCESS, JALUD REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT LIBYA WOULD ONLY SUPPORT SUCH A DECLARATION IF IT WERE MADE BY THE U.N. AND PROVIDED THAT LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WERE NOT TERMED AS TERRORISM.

4. COMMENT: THE TEXTS OF THE INDO-LIBYAN AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS ARE NOT AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE INITIAL REPORTS THAT THE PROTOCOL ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION MAY BE ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR TO ONES CONCLUDED BETWEEN INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES INVOLVING COLLABORATION LARGELY LIMITED TO THE EXCHANGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF SCIENTISTS AND THE PROVISION OF TRAINING FACILITIES (SEE BOMBAY 689).

5. IF THE ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS ARE EVEN PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED, IT WILL RESULT IN A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE HITHERTO-UNIMPORTANT ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. BILATERAL TRADE HAS BEEN MINIMAL IN RECENT YEARS, WITH NO INDIAN IMPORTS OF LIBYAN PRODUCTS. IN 1976-77 INDIAN EXPORTS TO LIBYA AMMOUNTED TO ONLY ABOUT DOLS 15 MILLION, MAINLY ENGINEERING GOODS. INDIA NOW HAS ONLY ONE JOINT VENTURE (ENGINEERING CONSULTANCY) IN LIBYA AFTER THE ABANDONMENT OF TWO OTHER JOINT VENTURES. THERE ARE SEVERAL INDIAN TURN-KEY PROJECTS IN LIBYA, INCLUDING AN INTEGRATED STEEL PLANT, A DAM, TEXTILE MILL MACHINERY AND TRANSMISSION LINES, TOWERS AND CONDUCTORS. ALSO, INDIAN PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF APPROXIMATELY DOLS 180 MILLION WORTH OF AIRPORT FACILITIES AT GHAT AND BRAK, HOUSING, A HOSPITAL AND A ROAD.
GOHEEN

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